given in Rajya Sabha on 3rd March, 1989 and state:

(a) whether the Vigilance investigations into the irregularities committed by Patna Branch Manager of NCCF in respect of purchase of potatoes and Masoor Chanti have since been completed; and

(b) if so, what are the findings of the Enquiry and what disciplinary action has been taken against the involved Branch Manager?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) and (b) NCCF have reported that Vigilance Investigations into the matter have been completed and action is under process.

Protest Against the increase in the import Duty

497. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Living Media (India) Pvt. Ltd., Anand Bazar Patrika Ltd. have protested against the increase in import duty on glazed newsprint by Rs. 3000/- per tonne;

(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Times of India dated the 4th March, 1989 to the effect that the President of the Indian Newspaper Society has stated that this step would weaken the press by severe financial pressure; make the periodicals prohibitively expensive; and compel the periodicals to increase their advertisement rates making them less competitive with Doordarshan who have recently raised their rates, thus driving away advertisers from magazines;

(c) the extent to which the price of glazed newsprint has been increased since June last; and

(d) whether the press is regarded as an integral part of the country's democratic framework and may not be allowed to weaken?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The price of glazed newsprint (exclusive of Customs Duty) which was Rs. 9,180/- in second quarter 1988 has since gone-up to Rs. 12,610 in second quarter of 1989.

(d) The Government fully appreciates the role of the press in a democratic polity and is committed to its balanced growth. The rate of customs duty on the glazed newsprint has been revised in the light of the recommendations of the Kelkar Committee on Newsprint Policy.

Advance to Farmers for their Foodgrains

498. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched a scheme under which a farmer can draw about 80 per cent advance of the value of foodgrains kept in his house and duly pledged to a bank just as in the case of a trader in a Mandi;

(b) if so, what are the details of the scheme, the districts where it has been started and what have been experiences of the farmers; and

(c) the districts proposed to be covered under the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. A scheme called Produce (Marketing) Loan scheme has been introduced from December 1988 on a pilot basis in